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REFLECTIONS

ON THE

PRESENT CRISIS OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS,

WITH

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE CAUSES AND REMEDIES

OF

THE EXISTING CLAMOURS,

AND

ALLEGED GRIEVANCES, OF THE COUNTRY,

AS CONNECTED WITH

POPULATION, SUBSISTENCE, WAGES OF LABOURERS,

EDUCATION, &c.

MOST RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT,

ON OCCASION OF THEIR ASSEMBLING ON THE 18TH OF APRIL, 1831,

FOR THE FURTHER

CONSIDERATION OF THE QUESTION OF REFORM.

BY

SIR GILBERT BLANE, BART. F. R. S.

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The reader will perceive in perusing the first pages of this Tract, that it was the author's wish and intention to withhold his name ; feeling that whatever merit it may contain (if any) it is due to the matter, and not to any weight belonging to the personal authority of so obscure a writer. But in compliance with the earnest solicitation of his too partial friends, he has consented to its appearing on the Title-page,—The only other explanation which the author has to make to the publick, is to deprecate their censure on account of the haste in which it has been written, whereby neither the matter nor the composition are so well arranged as he wishes. In ordinary cases *haste* is not a respectful excuse to the publick, for duty and decorum requires, that whoever comes before their tribunal, should do so in a becoming exterior ; but as the present case is restricted by the close approach of the event to which it relates, he trusts he may meet with indulgence.

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REFLECTIONS, &c.

INTRODUCTION.

As the Publick have a right to require of him who addresses them through the press, and thereby calls upon them to sacrifice no small share of their time and attention, to render some account of his pretensions and qualifications, the author of this Tract feels that he is bound to comply with what seems so reasonable.

In times like the present, pregnant as they are with dangers and difficulties, present and prospective, and of no ordinary interest to the vital concerns of the state, it becomes every good man to contribute his mite of knowledge towards enlightening those who have so manfully undertaken the responsibility of managing them. Difficulties and dangers are nothing new in the fluctuating affairs of this world, but it will hardly be denied that there perhaps never was a conjuncture in which they wore a more threatening aspect than the present. The whole complexion of the times is indeed so complicated and unprecedented, that no experience, nor hardly any analogy, can furnish the statesman with a clew to guide him through the labyrinth. Any one, therefore, who like the writer of this is fully sensible of the arduousness of the task, will approach it with suitable diffidence and

modesty ; but at the same time renouncing that false shame and shaking off that sloth, which might lead him to despair of suggesting such means of political expediency as may have escaped those at the helm of the state, though he knows and admits that they are far wiser than himself. His scene of observation in the early part of his publick life, consisted chiefly of what fell under his eye in foreign war, in the course of which he was at the side of Lord Rodney in his great victories in the American War. In the Revolutionary war of France he was a member of a civil Board belonging to the Navy ; and in the year 1809, he was dispatched on a special mission by the Cabinet Council to the Island of Walcheren, to examine and report on the state of the army there, which left England a few months before, 40,000 strong, the largest that ever left the British shores on a single expedition, but labouring at that time under a most calamitous mortality from sickness.

The writer of this, whether by nature, or from education, or the company he has kept, has ever felt warmly interested in all matters of publick moment *Homo sum*—, and on occasion of the two years 1799 and 1800, of great scarcity, employed his pen in common with Lord Farnborough, Sir Thomas Turton and others, in endeavouring to open the eyes of the publick to the real cause of that distress, for not only the great majority of the vulgar and ignorant, but a certain proportion of those of superior rank and education, including

some members of both Houses of Parliament, the Judges too and others highly instructed, most unaccountably believed that the distress was mainly owing to the unwarrantable and even criminal practices of the dealers in the articles of subsistence, whereby the necessities of life were withheld from the market and exorbitantly enhanced in price. The work here alluded to was published in the form of a letter to Lord Spencer, a nobleman whose public and private virtues and talents well entitled him to such a compliment. That the above-mentioned prejudices had not the effect of creating a famine, as in similar instances recorded in history, particularly in the reign of Edward II. was probably owing to the whole power of the press being let loose upon them, for neither the philosophy of Adam Smith, nor the eloquence of Mr. Burke had been able to extinguish them. And we are glad to adduce a proof of the occasional practical utility of that dreadful engine the press, so powerful for evil as well as good. The author has also exercised himself on several other subjects of what may be called *human statistics*, a study through which perhaps his vanity inspires him with the hope of communicating hints of some little value at the present crisis, and for which he was further qualified by living much in the society of some of the eminent statesmen of the late age, among whom may be reckoned the first Earl of Liverpool, and the Right Honourable William Windham.

It will not be expected that one now beset with age (82) and infirmities, besides being closely pursued by the great finisher of all labours and duties, should treat a subject so extensive with the methodical and lucid order due to the publick, far less to follow up the details into which it ramifies itself. For the subject embraces among other items the following, Population, Subsistence, Health, Corn Laws, Currency, Employment, Capital, Machinery, each of which will probably be adverted to, according to their comparative importance, reciprocal bearings, the mutual action and counter-action with which they all operate upon each other.

POPULATION AND SUBSISTENCE.

The first Head mentioned in this list, is perhaps the most important, but certainly the most difficult to handle, particularly as the consideration of it is inseparable from that of Subsistence. Thus complicated therefore, it claims the foremost notice, and out of their joint consideration, there arise some of those *quæstiones vexatæ*, or bows of Ulysses, which have bid defiance to more vigorous arms than those of the Author.

It will throw some light on the multiplication of the human species to premise the consideration of it by a hasty sketch of the same principle in the other subjects of Organic Nature.

The most remarkable circumstance with regard to the Kingdoms of Nature, is the great anxiety (if it is not speaking too irreverently) of the author of

Nature to provide against their extinction by the stupendous multiplication of the seminal principle. In the vegetable, the simplest of the departments, this is matter of palpable proof to the most superficial observer, in contemplating for instance the profusion of seeds scattered over the fields, as exemplified not only in the down of thistles, but more strikingly in those grains which constitute our subsistence in the form of farinaceous food. A very small proportion, however, of these is required, and actually applied to the purpose of perpetuating the species, whether scattered casually, or by the hand of man. This unbounded germination is checked, partly by their becoming the food of animals, partly by the want of space to contain them.

The like wisdom of Providence is observable in the animal kingdom, whether terrestrial or marine. It has been computed that there are as many eggs in the roe of a certain fish as there are individuals of the whole human race. There are few problems in Nature in the solution of which naturalists are more at fault than the disposal and nutrition of the finny family. It is proverbially true that they prey upon each other; but it is so much even beyond conjecture, to ascertain what is the ultimate food of fish, that it is the tenet and belief of some of the most respectable enquirers into this department of nature, that the last fishes which those next above them make their food have no sustenance but water. The phenomena of the immense

shoals of herrings, and the fact of gold and silver fishes living without any visible food, are some of the grounds upon which they found their doctrine. The *amphibia* bear a greater resemblance to fish than land animals in their redundant procreation.

The abundant and apparently redundant multiplication of land animals is not less conspicuous. The bountiful Creator however has provided such sufficient sustenance for them in the spontaneous productions of other organic creatures, animal and vegetable, as not to allow them to perish through famine, whether in the seminal, fetal, immature, or adult state. Their perishing by famine seems mainly to be prevented by their preying on each other, or by being the prey of man, whether in their wild or domestic state. Though there seems a smaller redundance in the procreative powers of land animals than of fish and *amphibia*, there is nevertheless a tendency to multiply far above the mere purpose of their perpetuating the species. As the rate of this multiplication must in the nature of things be geometrical, the comparative rapidity of it in different species must depend on the number brought forth at each birth, and the length of the interval between birth and the adult age. For these reasons it is that the human species is one of the slowest in its multiplication. Yet slow as it is, we find it far above what any actual scale of subsistence could bear, as a moment's consideration will evince. For, according to the natural law of human

life, the species could by possibility double in fifteen years, but let us call it twenty; and let us call the present population of England twelve millions, which it must by this time exceed, for by the last census, nine years ago, it was 11,261,437, and the increase the preceding ten years was found to have been 1,722,610, exclusive of Wales. Under this moderate assumption therefore, the population in twenty years would reach twenty-four millions, and in another twenty years would amount to forty-eight millions, requiring an amount of subsistence far above what any fertility of nature ever known could supply; so that the question now becomes not by what rules and laws population is maintained, but how it is to be repressed, so as to adjust it to subsistence.

On all questions relating to this subject, the political and philosophical world is deeply indebted to Mr. Malthus. By a happy mode of illustration he has grounded his arguments on a principle that while, as has been above stated, the species has a tendency to multiply geometrically, food can only increase arithmetically; and has, in the view of those who comprehend him, followed up his reasoning with great powers of logic and language, equally sound and correct as they are eloquent and persuasive; and though he has done so with great liberality of mind and temper towards his adversaries, he has himself experienced a very opposite treatment.

In comparing the human with the brute creation,

one of the most distinctive features is the very great apparent advantage which mere animals enjoy above rational beings when ushered into the world, by which is here meant not only the helpless state of infancy, but the natural want of defence of the species at large, by not being provided either with covering against cold, nor with weapons of offence and defence, like the animals which range the forests, the waters, and even the air; and to which he would at first sight be supposed to fall an easy prey. Such however is the power of Reason with which the Almighty has endowed him, that he has been enabled not only to defend himself from their attack, but to assert his supremacy over the strongest and best armed of them.

Another peculiar feature of rationality is, that man, in the rudest state in which he has ever been found to exist, has instituted Marriage in some form or other, so as to save him from the degradation of being brought on a level with the brute creation by promiscuous intercourse.

A third feature peculiar to man as a rational being is, that it has pleased the all wise and beneficent Creator to implant in his moral nature among other virtues that of Chastity; by which constitution he is not only dignified, but so checked by the self command of his appetites, as to prevent his excess of multiplication.

A fourth distinctive token which characterises the lords of the Creation is, that while other animals

are maintained by the spontaneous productions of nature, he is doomed to produce it by the sweat of his brow. It is demonstrable, that if man had been furnished with spontaneous food, clothing, and shelter, so as to supersede labour and industry, as in the case of light, air, and water, none of those attributes which constitute his happiness and dignity, could ever have been developed. In such a state of things there could have been no property, no play for the active and inventive energies of man, whether mental or corporeal, no room for the talents exercised in productive industry and commercial enterprize, all the mutual and endearing ties and dependencies of social and civilized life, all the trades, professions, arts, and sciences, whether ministering to those accommodations and elegances which in various degrees constitute a considerable proportion of the felicity of civilized life, whether as objects of pursuit or enjoyment, would have been untasted, because unknown. This remark holds strikingly true as it regards agriculture, which made its first appearance at the very dawn of civilization, as one of the obvious wants of rational nature. This is proved and finely illustrated by Homer, where, in the passage regarding Polyphemus, he so happily contrasts savage life with the cultivated, by typifying the former under the personification of the monster of the cave, with those of refined ages, whom he calls ἀροφαγοι, that is, eaters of bread, implying that agriculture was their most characteristic fea-

ture ; and can any thing be more beautifully illustrative of the same subject than the lines of Virgil, so familiar to scholars—*Pater ipse colendi haud facilem*.—Cicero, with equal eloquence says, *Nihil agriculturâ melius, nihil uberius, nihil dulcius, nihil liberi hominis dignius ; nothing more becoming a gentleman*, however remote from that relic of feudal barbarism, which reprobated it as the most degrading of all occupations. Of all the funds of virtuous labour this is assuredly the most prominent. But without proceeding further, great light will be thrown on the subject by a glance of the eye on the annexed Table, from which it appears that the proportion of the population of England at the Norman Conquest was that of about the seventh part, soon after the middle of the sixteenth century that of somewhat more than a third part, and at the beginning of the eighteenth century about one-half of what it was in the year 1821. It appears further from an inspection of the Table, that this increase was rapidly progressive during this series of ages, for between the Conquest and the reign of Edward III. about three hundred years, the increase was much less than between the latter and that of Elizabeth, though only about two hundred years. But what is this to the rapidity of its progress in modern times when it has been found, according to the annexed synoptical view, to have more than doubled in England, between the years 1700 and 1821. There has been some encrease throughout Europe, for Mr. Jacob, in his Tract on the Corn Laws, p. 148, has stated

POPULATION OF ENGLAND,

Taken from Censuses, exclusive of Scotland and Wales.

Computed from the data furnished by Domesday Book, the title of a Survey made between the years 1081 and 1086*	-	-	1,589,609
Computed from an enumeration of all those of both Sexes under the age of fourteen, in the year 1377†	-	-	2,108,000
Computed from an enumeration made of fighting men, reckoned about one in five of all ages and sexes, on the approach of the Spanish Armada in the year 1587	-	-	4,688,000
Extracted from a computation made through the whole of the 18th century from the Registers of Baptisms, by which the number of the Population in 1700 was found to be	-	-	5,108,000
in 1750	-	-	6,017,700
in 1801	-	-	8,331,434
The last Statement belongs properly to the following century, but differing only one year, it was thought unnecessary to make a separate Statement.			
Calculated from actual enumeration			
in 1801	-	-	8,331,434
in 1811	-	-	9,538,827
in 1821	-	-	11,261,437

* The three most Northern Counties were not included in this Survey. It is nevertheless remarkable enough that the encrease of population in ten years, viz. from 1811 to 1821, being 1,722,610, is more than the whole population as above stated at the Conquest.

† Preparatory to the levying of a capitation tax in the reign of Edward III.

to account for these very curious and highly interesting facts, and the sound and correct understanding of which is of the last importance to statesmen and legislators. This class of *Sçavans* have certainly been found too often at fault in their dogmas and deductions, but a liberal mind will make great allowance for them, when it is considered what a difficult subject they have to deal with ; a subject, the elements of which embrace not only that class of truths which belongs to the exact sciences, and the laws of nature, but is clogged with all those intricacies, exceptions and plausibilities connected with the passions, prejudices, and errors of a rational and moral being.

Deprecating then too harsh a criticism, let us find out if we can, in what the present age differs from that of the Norman Conquest ; of Edward III ; of Queen Elizabeth ; and of the 18th century.

The gross barbarism existing previously to the Conquest was still further barbarised by the feudal oppression then introduced, of which oppression there requires no other proof than the Forest laws, affording a passage in history so big with wanton cruelty, that for the credit of human nature one would gladly see it blotted out of the annals of the world. Here were wanting the first principles of policy, consisting, as they ought, in the protection of person and property ; and hardly any thing more need be said to account for the difference of it in 1080, and in 1821. But over and above these was the ignorance, in the former period,

of those arts of life which minister to the production and fabrication of the articles constituting the necessaries of life ; that is, the means of subsistence, clothing, and shelter. This state of oppression and ignorance continued to lose ground very slowly, for we learn from history that famines were very frequent, and that great misery prevailed, not only under the immediate successors of the Conqueror, but till nearly the end of the Plantagenet race of kings, every bad crop producing either a famine, or a dearth approaching to it ; and there is reason to believe that two consecutive bad years were always followed by famine, as was experienced in the reign of Edward the Second. And it was at this period that the evil was more than ordinarily aggravated by the erroneous prevailing opinion regarding its cause, which was so universally believed to consist in the practices of those who dealt in corn (though in fact, the only persons who of all others were capable of alleviating the distress, by equalising the distribution of the necessaries of life, and bringing them to a fair market,) that the most severe penalties, even capital punishments, were enacted against them. We have sufficient evidence of this, for it happens that the monkish annals of those ages, though dark in other respects, are here clear and full ; and though they record that famines never occurred but after bad years,¹ these prejudices continued to exist till towards the middle of the 15th century; the last real famine having occurred in

the year 1448. The great error of the Government consisted in fixing the market prices, and prohibiting the transport of provisions from one district to another. The over officiousness of Government in regulating markets, has no where, I believe, been more forcibly represented than in the following passage in Dr. Adam Ferguson's History of Civil Society—"Men are tempted to labor and to practice lucrative arts by motives of interest. Secure to the workman the fruits of his labor, give him the prospects of independence and freedom; the public has found a faithful minister in the acquisition of wealth, and a faithful steward in hoarding what he has gained. The statesman in this can do little more than avoid doing mischief." It is of the utmost importance to enquire into the causes of our not having been visited with famine for 360 years, unless we except the year 1699, when a few were said to have perished of want from a succession of bad years. In this question two circumstances are remarkable enough; the one, that the use of animal food was more general than the produce of agriculture; the other, that there appears to have been no famine; nor were any remarkable dearths during the civil war either of the Princes of the houses of York and Lancaster, nor of the King and Parliament. Probably the occurrence of famine would have been still more frequent in the early periods of our history here alluded to, had the main stock of subsistence consisted in corn, for the stores of animal food are less dependant on the

seasons than the crops. The great dependance on animal food, however, was no doubt one reason for the low state of the population, for cattle required a large extent of natural herbage to maintain them. A large share of farinaceous food must nevertheless have entered into the general mass of subsistence, otherwise bad years would not have been so productive of so much distress. In process of time, as civilization advanced, so did agriculture; yet as late as Henry VIII. we find that the price of beef, veal, and pork, being considered the food of the poor, was limited to the price of one penny for two pounds, or two pounds and a half, at a time when wheat was sold for seven shillings and eight-pence the quarter; so that animal food was only at one-twentieth, while wheat was about one-tenth, of the present prices. Nay, in the 17th century, wheat bore a much higher ratio to animal food than in our times, for it appears by the Eton tables, so often referred to by authors, that the former bore a higher price during the whole of that century than it did for forty years preceding the year 1773, whereas butchers' meat bore only half the price in the former period of what it did in the latter. Previous to the 18th century, therefore, it appears that animal food constituted the chief sustenance of the labouring poor; and it ought to be remarked, that wheat, which is now their principal food, was then little used but by the upper ranks. Oats and rye, even in the southern parts of England, were then the most common

farinaceous articles in use. As civilization advanced, and agriculture improved, the proportion of animal food became again greater, for the raising of food for cattle, which formerly consisted solely of natural pasture, has become a great branch of agriculture, not only through the improvement of pasture by tillage, but by the cultivation of hay, turnips, carrots, cabbages, and potatoes. Some of these articles, now the common food of cattle, were, two hundred years ago, considered as delicacies for the human species. Even the practice of storing hay for winter provender was not in use till after the middle of the 17th century ; for in the reign of Charles II. it was customary to live upon salted meat in the winter months ; and we learn from medical writers, that in these months the sea scurvy was a frequent complaint in this metropolis.

2ndly. The next cause of the frequency of famines in those ages, was the scanty production, in relation to the numbers and necessities of the consumers, owing to the more simple manners of the times. Before the introduction of refinement and luxury, there was no inducement to produce more than what was required for mere subsistence. The quantity of grain employed in later times in brewing, distilling, feeding of horses, the manufacture of starch, and other heads of unnecessary consumption, becomes a sort of disposable surplus or reserve, which in years of scarcity may be turned into the channels of necessity. It is evident, there-

fore, though at first sight paradoxical, that luxury, or what on a narrow view would be called waste, is the principal resource and security against famine. In fact, what prospect can be so dreadful, as that in years of common plenty there should be produced just enough and no more than what will suffice for the wants of nature? When this is strictly the case, every bad season must be followed by famine. In consequence of there being no demand, except for the purpose of bare human subsistence, the prices of corn in the periods of our history above alluded to, fell much farther below the average than they do in this age, of which the most authentic evidence is adduced in a work by the two Lysons, entitled *Magna Britannia*. The consequence of this was, that farmers had no motive for keeping up an abundant and equal supply. The unnecessary expenditure in years of plenty, therefore, may be considered as a perpetual public granary, far more permanent and less precarious than any that could be made in storehouses, where grain is liable to deterioration and decay from vermin or putrefaction, and which requires unremitted vigilance to maintain and replenish. However commendable and expedient it may be therefore to make retrenchment in the above mentioned articles of luxury, under the pressure of scarcity, it would be highly impolitic and dangerous to make such retrenchment perpetual.

3rdly. The want of internal commerce. It appears

from the records of those times, that there was no method of equalising the consumption of different seasons, for in the course of the same year the price would vary, not by a third or a fourth part; not three or four times, but eight or nine times, as may be seen by inspecting the tables that have been constructed of the annual prices of wheat from the year 1202 till the year 1764. It appears from the same tables, that the plenty of one year was not called in aid of the scarcity of another, for a very wide difference between two consecutive years is observed constantly to occur. It equally appears that the wants and distresses of one part of the country were not relieved by the greater plenty that prevailed in adjoining districts. It is mentioned in the Chronicle of Dunstable, a document frequently quoted by historians, that while wheat was sold at Dunstable for a crown the quarter, it was sold at Northampton for eight shillings. There were in those days many natural and unavoidable obstacles to free intercourse, such as the want of high roads, canals, and posts. But these difficulties might have been surmounted had it not been for a law prohibiting the transportation of corn from one district to another.

4thly. There was no corn imported from foreign countries in those ages.

Lastly. What completed the annihilation of commerce, and carried public distress to the highest pitch, was, that the popular odium, and the severity of the laws against dealers in provisions, were

then at their height, for all such dealers were proscribed under the contumelious appellations of forestallers, regraters, engrossers, badgers, and jobbers. The monkish authors stigmatise them by every opprobrious epithet which language can furnish: the penalties inflicted by law were forfeiture of goods and chattels, pillory, imprisonment, banishment; and in the reign of Edward III. the punishment was made death by a statute, which was repealed, however, in the same reign. This reign, though so glorious by the splendor of its victories abroad, appears to have been one of the most calamitous as to its domestic interests, for beside the evil of foreign war, famine and pestilence raged with the utmost severity, to which were superadded great political ignorance and considerable civil misrule, of both which the preceding statement, as well as the great depreciation of coin, and the fixing the price not only of the necessaries of life but of labour, may be taken as examples.

When we reflect, therefore, that there was no relief to be derived in case of scarcity, from one season to another, from one year to another, from one county to another, nor from one country to another, we may safely affirm, that of all the causes of famine which have been enumerated, except bad seasons, the want of commerce had the greatest share in producing them; which might be ascribed also to compulsory settling of prices, and the want of those institutions founded on credit, by which

farmers could by the temporary accommodation of loans, reserve a stock of corn for the summer months, which by the bye was one of the most odious practices in the eyes of the vulgar, though so conducive to prevent dearth or famine in years of scarcity. The introduction of potatoes into Ireland has been demonstrably the cause, almost exclusively, of an encrease of population there from one million and a half in the end of the 17th century, to seven million in the beginning of the 19th ; and this alone is sufficient to establish the principle, that it is the natural tendency of encrease of food, to encrease population, and not the reverse of this.

What then are the changes that have taken place since the middle of the 15th century, which have ever since that time prevented scarcity and dearth from amounting to famine? The more immediate causes seem to have been the freedom of internal commerce, which began to take place about the above-mentioned period, and importation from foreign parts, the mention of which is first met with in history a little later. Not long afterwards civilization and commerce began to make rapid advances, under the Princes of the House of Tudor, and have continued to flourish and extend themselves ever since, so as in the course of three centuries to raise this country to its present state of unequalled prosperity and grandeur. The improved state of agriculture, and its becoming more honorable, together with the introduction of potatoes, have been additional resources

in later times. And it is certainly none of the least advantages concomitant on wealth and industry, that they have been instrumental in preventing such grievous calamities as famine; for however deplorable the evils of the present day may be, how far short are they of what would have occurred in those periods from short crops in two consecutive years, such as in 1799 and 1800? Such an occurrence would then have been productive of famine, and probably of its usual concomitant pestilence: the state of society and manners in those days being such that the stock of food produced and imported, bore a much smaller proportion to the population than in our times; and the prejudices of the age were such as not to allow middle men to apportion and equalise the consumption of different seasons of the year, nor of different districts, as is now so happily exemplified.

In following the swelling tide of population as exhibited from age to age in the Table, it becomes a most important question, by what means the subsistence has kept pace in England with the population; for had it not done so, famines must have occurred still oftener and with greater intensity.

In clearing the ground for this enquiry, the author finds himself constrained to call in question the soundness of some assumed principles of Political Economy, which he thinks cannot have failed to have misled those who have given their unqualified assent to them. M. Rousseau of Geneva has

said in some part of his works, that any man who puts bread into his mouth, without having contributed by his labor directly or indirectly to the production of it, is guilty of an act of gross immorality. This author was not remarkable for the soundness of his judgment in the practical affairs of life ; but there are others of the most acknowledged powers of understanding, and good sense, who have promulgated a very similar doctrine. Without wasting time in prolix argument we shall merely state the case and leave the reader to judge. In taking corn for an example, I understand the case to mean, that in no circumstance can the permanent production be so great as to leave a surplus over and above what is necessary for the maintenance of the labourer, the seed corn, and as much as will, when sold, pay wages, clothing, habitation, and fuel. In rude ages there is no surplus for the payment of rent, but when in the progress of civilization rent can be afforded, it is alleged that its expenditure by the landlord is dead waste. But what can be so clear as that these rents are expended in maintaining those who practice the various arts of life, multiplying and improving from day to day ?

We know from the late censuses that the rural population since the beginning of this century has at least amounted to one third of the whole ; and that the great improvement in skill, and in the invention and fabrication of tools, among others those of agriculture, are such, that one labourer in the

fields can produce a sufficiency for himself and four or five others. Now, what becomes of the surplus after all these wants have been supplied? After being sold at market, it passes to the landlord, that is the non-producer, the *fruges consumere natus* in the shape of rent. How is this rent expended? In the maintenance of the landlord and his menial servants, but chiefly of those who supply the demands of luxury: the coachmaker, the jeweller, the silk weaver, the architect; in short, the great body of artificers and artists. And is it not what has been paid to the landlord in the form of rent returned into the pockets of the farmers? All this is so self-evident that it would be an affront to the reader to pursue the argument further. And can it be denied that those idlers, the landlord and those dependent on his expenditure, are necessary links in that chain, by which rent paid by the farmer returns to him? In short, it is the moral of the fable of Menenius Agrippa expounded.

The want of due attention to this circle of compensations by which a wholesome and spontaneous balance is maintained, in the distribution and enjoyment of those materials which constitute the wealth of a nation, seem to be one of the most ordinary causes of the errors of political theorists. The author will endeavour to illustrate this by another example, which he will take from the question of the Irish absentees. He is not so great a novice in Political Economy, as not to have sur-

mounted the old vulgar error of making the advantageous balance of trade to consist in the exportation of as little money or bullion as possible ; but this in its full extent applies only to commercial transactions. It applies to money carried out of the country for the purpose of expenditure in a limited degree. This limitation is marked out by what may be called the *sphere of commercial influence*. It is quite conceivable, nay strictly true, that between England and Ireland, a trade profitable to both countries may be carried on by the cattle, corn, or linen of Ireland, being given in return for the broad cloth and hardware of England, just as would be the case between one county or province of Ireland and another, in the exchange of their respective commodities, so that there could be nothing unfair in carrying money from the one to the other, for the Irish gentleman in a residence in England, may be wearing the linen or eating the beef, the products of his own estate. I speak here merely of commercial reciprocation, not of moral advantages or disadvantages. Go one step beyond England, to France for example. It is quite conceivable that the Irish gentleman may there be wearing the linen imported from Ireland, while the Irish gentleman in his own country is drinking the wine of France. Here is some reciprocity, though far short of the case as stated with regard to England. But let the Irish gentleman carry the rents of his estate still farther from home, to Rome or Naples, then the link is

broken, for not only are all the inestimable moral and social advantages lost, but all such benefits as arise out of commerce with England and France.

There remains still to be mentioned one of the main (if not the principal) cause of the present distress and discontent, and it is one peculiar to the present times. The reader will probably anticipate me when I mention, the late practice of maintaining able bodied men and their families from the poor rates, when their wages are insufficient. This practice was first introduced in the year 1795, which being a year of scarcity, the magistrates in some of the counties thought themselves justified in permitting this, but after the scarcity ceased, not only was the practice continued, but was justified and enjoined in Mr. Pitt's Act the year following, regulating the provision for the poor, only modified and restricted as regarded children and widows. It has since spread nearly over all England. It is difficult to find words to express the abuse, perversion and mischievous consequences of this practice. Among others it has encouraged improvident marriages; for the parties being thereby not only released from all care about maintaining their families by their own virtuous industry, are even invited as it were to enter into the married life, by that preference which is given to them as objects of charity over those in single life. At the same time their moral character is debased, by their losing every shadow of self-respect. Nor can the landlords and farmers them-

selves be quite acquitted of some want of probity in requiring that part of the wages due by themselves, should be discharged out of the poor rates; and might they not fairly enough be accused also of folly, for are not these same poor rates paid by themselves? There will be infinite difficulty in treading back our steps so as to return to the old and wholesome practice, but it is the opinion I believe of all well-judging people that the sources of discontent, and the torrent of seditious audacity of the populace can in no other way be stemmed.

The next cause to be adverted to, is of a no less serious nature, and the more difficult to be combated in argument, that it assumes the specious disguise of moral feeling; for what I allude to consists in that ethical principle, by which it is alleged that all destitute persons whatever, without regard to the causes which have brought them into that state, are entitled to parochial relief. That there is an obligation called by jurists an *imperfect right* to relieve our fellow-creatures in extreme distress, from motives of humanity, is not meant to be denied; but that the labouring classes of the community should be allowed to entertain a confident belief that they have in all cases of distress a right actionable in law, though brought on by their own sloth or vice, is one of the most mischievous principles that can be instilled into their minds, and above all most detrimental to themselves. In the first place, it tends to divest them of that greatest of all the props of human society, the obligation of

providing for offspring, an obligation to which is no where more clearly and forcibly inculcated than in the Scriptures, where it is said, "*If any one provide not for his own, and especially his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*"

Do not feelings and principles adverse to this strike at the root of all human virtue and happiness? Is it not the exercise of that industry by which children are maintained, which constitutes all that is sweet and manly in the duties of life? And how utterly degrading is it that any one should trust to compulsory support, unless under incapacity from infirmity or other unforeseen cause, and the claim being equally valid though reduced to want through sloth, ebriety, or other vices, without the exception even of illegitimate children. Can any understanding be so infatuated as not to see how subversive this must be of all morality, all public and private happiness. It is however a principle which has been avowed within the walls of Parliament, and which had probably a share in giving countenance to those who so perversely suffered, nay, legalized, the addition to wages out of the poors rates in 1795 and 96. It goes far also in accounting for the whole train of evil consequent on improvident marriages. But ought they to be called improvident? for they are not so as regards the foresight of those who contract them, being assured that under all circumstances their offspring will be provided for. There are still ulterior and greater evils inseparably consequent on this system

of policy ; for their assurance of compulsory support produces an insolent, riotous, and seditious tone, to the exclusion of all the gentle virtues of society, and the liberal and kind dependance of those of different ranks and fortunes on each other. But neither have we yet arrived at the climax of evil which awaits us. For whoever will lend even a superficial attention to it, must perceive that it is destructive of every idea of property, for by the uncontrolled latitude of the most worthless portion of the community in the exercise of this right, they can take the law into their own hands, and muster the physical force of the populace in overpowering all law and justice ; a state of things leading directly to open war ; a war too *ad internecionem*, being in its nature interminable, till the stronger shall have exterminated the weaker.

In reciting the causes of the superior rate of Population of this over most other countries, we are to distinguish those conducive to happiness and respect from those which draw down misery and degradation. To the former belong those causes already enumerated by which our general prosperity has been improved, that is a better administration of justice in the protection of person and property, a superior degree of those accommodations of life on which health depends, such as a sufficiency of wholesome food and other comforts ; also the well known new openings for employment, such as the practice of the mechanical arts far above any other nation, and what ought never to be omitted in

enumerating our peculiar blessings, the plenty of coals.

On the other hand let us enumerate the causes of that degree of population which may be termed morbid. These are improvident marriages, the adverse state of commerce, which deprives manufacturers and artificers of employment, as happened after the late peace ; also what has been just now mentioned regarding the vicious practices of the lower orders, who are now allowed to believe that they have compulsory right to maintenance.

It is highly material here to remark, that however much the labouring poor may be to blame for their vice, sloth and insolence, it cannot be denied that from the adverse state of commerce and other causes, there have been throughout many districts a number of labourers who have been thrown out of employment without any fault of their own. And what is not a little to be deplored is, that these have not been duly distinguished from those whose sufferings have been either feigned or exaggerated, and that a pretence should have been afforded to the ill-intentioned, for alleging that they have not met with due consideration and relief. A commission appointed to investigate the reality of these complaints, or to detect their falsehood, would in all probability have saved the country from much mischief, prevented much misery, and removed much groundless obloquy. What renders this doubly deplorable is, that it drove the Duke of

Wellington from the helm of the state, which he was in many respects so well qualified to steer, by his superior resolution and good sense. How proud should we have been to have seen united in one man (and he a British subject) the qualities of a great statesman, with those of one of the greatest captains of this or any other age or country, and at this moment the most renowned individual that treads the earth. The French nation will not presume to compare their Du Guesclins nor their Turennes with him; but how much more would our pride swell could we have seen united in our warrior a statesman like Sully. His detractors indeed do sarcastically insinuate a comparison with Marshal Saxe, who in peace, and in his advanced life, gave himself up to frivolity and revelry.

The writer of this has never met with an admirer and well wisher of the Duke of Wellington, who in common with himself has not deeply regretted that he had not instituted an enquiry into the real state of the labouring poor, being fully convinced either by actual observation, or faithful evidence, that a certain portion of that class, were severely suffering under privations from inadequate wages; and let it not be thought that in this we are advocating the cause of the multitude, and giving countenance to discontent and sedition. Quite the contrary. We think they have been too leniently dealt by, and that the judges have had good reason to be dissatisfied (as they were said to have

been) at not having been duly supported by the executive government in their late awards. In order to justify even greater severity than that which was used, the populace should have been placed in the predicament in which their own coarse proverb places them, and which the writer begs his readers pardon for quoting. The proverb alluded to is *pay well and hang well*. That is let all such as have been guilty of destroying machines and burning stacks, and personal violence, suffer the utmost pains of the law, but at the same time let relief be afforded to the real sufferers, the first step towards which should have been, at all risks to abolish the practice of maintaining labourers from the poors rates, and this perhaps is not to be effected otherwise than by throwing back the whole wages on the employers, and by the farmers demanding an abatement of rents.

The last remark which I think need be made in accounting for the great start which England has taken over the Continent in point of population, is the peculiar advantage she enjoys regarding coal; and of which some of the more enlightened persons of the Continent are so sensible, that one of the Spanish Deputies sent to this country, in the year 1808, in a conversation with me, called coals our *Black Indies*; that is, equally precious to us as gold and silver to them. But they are indeed infinitely more so; for to this mineral, peculiar to ourselves, may be traced the whole advantage we enjoy over other countries, not only as regards

culinary operations, personal health and comfort, but in its application to manufactures, to many of the most valuable of which the abundance of them is indispensable. And of this there needs no other proof than that the coal districts are the most populous, and not those excelling in agriculture. Lancashire, far below average in fertility, has advanced far above all the other counties in population in the course of the two last centuries, particularly the last, a fact sufficiently accounted for by the abundance of coals.

Before quitting this subject, the writer will repeat an observation made in a former publication, in which he alludes to the danger of England falling into too great a dependance on potatoes. Sir W. Petty in his enumeration of the population of Ireland in 1672, computes it at one million and two hundred thousand. At present, that is after a lapse of 148 years, it is computed at about seven millions. Though potatoes had never been known there would certainly have been a small encrease of numbers, so as perhaps at the utmost to have made them to amount to two millions. Can any reflecting person doubt that the over population and consequent misery of that country is imputable to the small tenements by which the bare necessities of food can be produced, by less human labour, and on a smaller area of ground, than any other article of subsistence, while the other articles of life, clothing, and shelter, and in many parts fuel are withheld? Can it be doubted, I say, that this is the

main cause of that misery of which we hear so much, and it is to be feared with too much truth? And does it not appear that the excessive facility by which bare existence can be maintained, is an approach to the evils, which have been alleged to arise from spontaneous food? Let this be a warning to England to guard against the encroachment of potatoes on the virtuous occupations of agriculture.

HEALTH.

Health is so great a constituent of human felicity, that we might well expect it to be more frequently enumerated as one of the essential elements of what is stated to be the *summum bonum* of human happiness. It is remarkable enough that there is no single word expressive of this *summum bonum*, and equally remarkable, that there has not as yet been any satisfactory definition of what is meant by *wealth*; and that health, a word which seems to designate the nearest approach to this ultimate object of human pursuit and desire, notwithstanding its being proverbially a boon, without which all others would be of no avail, seems to be made but little account of. By some the word *liberty* is understood to stand for all that is desirable in human life, and so it does if its import is made to consist not only in the doing and saying whatever we will, so that it be not injurious to others, but also in enjoying the unmolested possession of person and property, for it becomes

then a synonymous expression with perfection of good government. But whoever pronounces, or hears pronounced, the word *liberty*, especially if they belong to the vulgar and untutored classes of society, it readily associates itself in its import with *licentiousness*, exciting a tone of mind more disposed to resist than to obey the laws ; whereas, the feelings excited by the other part of the definition are a-kin to that self-control which is favourable to obedience to the laws. Let us therefore be content with what, though not expressed by a single word, is sufficiently intelligible by circumlocution. And under this explanation health will surely stand among the foremost constituents of the *summum bonum* of human life.

And what can be so cheering as to reflect that in the present age we far surpass all preceding ages with which we are made acquainted, in point of health, and we may venture to affirm the same with regard to longevity.

In comparing this country with itself, chronologically, there has appeared in what has already been stated, in the several epochas of our history, viz. the Norman Conquest, the age of Edward III. that of Elizabeth, that of the 17th and 18th century and the beginning of the present century, sufficiently palpable and well ascertained causes of our superiority in all the materials of health and comfort. The inferior condition of the population at the Conquest and for two or three hundred years after, consists in the cruel civil oppres-

sions in the early part of that series of ages, and though in succeeding eras there was a gradual mitigation of this evil, there remained a like degree of scantiness in the supply of the necessaries of life, these being inferior to those of our own time both in quantity and quality, bad clothing, also, bad habitation, a frequent recurrence of famines, leprosy, sweating-sickness and pestilence, to which may be added, the scanty though melancholy records we have of the frequent recurrence of putrid fevers, small pox, &c. some of which, such as the sweating sickness and leprosy, have disappeared, the small-pox nearly so, also the sea scurvy which used to break out in the winter season. To the causes consisting in the deficiency of food and shelter, there ought to be added the want of personal cleanliness. Linen was but little used, and soap was almost unknown till the 17th century.—The agues also which constituted so large a proportion of the diseases in the bills of mortality have now disappeared in consequence of the cleanliness and dryness of our streets, and the like may be said of the rest of England, in consequence of the draining practised as an agricultural improvement, which has confined agues to a few undrainable districts, such as Cambridgeshire, Essex, and Lincolnshire. These advantages do much more than compensate for the disadvantages arising from the less healthy occupation of manufacturers, though they appear by the censuses to have been greatly exaggerated. The extinction of the sea scurvy is pecu-

liarly deserving of notice, by the incredible advantage it has ensured to the Navy, for till the end of the last century, when an infallible specifick for it (lemon juice) was supplied to ships of war, no ship could keep the sea more than seven or eight weeks, whereas they can now do so to an indefinite length of time. By this means the efficient service of our men of war is doubled, for formerly it was necessary to hold in readiness a sufficient number to replace those, which were compelled by scurvy to return into port; and what a consolation is this, particularly in the present state of the finances, that the Navy can be kept up at half its former expence!

In short, it may with truth be affirmed, that however inferior England may be to many other countries in mildness of climate and fertility of soil, apparently so adverse to health and comfort, this is more than compensated by those strenuous exertions of mind and body which have conferred on her that superiority of character which distinguishes the inhabitants of this island, as well as that pre-eminent power, prosperity, and happiness which they enjoy.

The four great necessities of life are food, clothing, shelter, and fuel; and it is to the skill and labour which the climate of England renders indispensable for the procuring the three first of these, that those habits of industry and hardihood are acquired which are equally conducive to virtue, intelligence, and health. It is truly said, that

under all the disadvantages and vicissitudes of our rains, fogs, and frosts, there are more days in the year in which a person can go abroad with satisfaction and comfort, than in the south of Europe, where the atmospheric heat confines people to the house, the greater part of the day, for a great part of the year, while we are in the full enjoyment of the healthful delights of the open air, and even disregard the fervour of the sun-beams from which the indigenous population shrink. Nor do we find ourselves under the necessity, like the Russians, to contrive such a system of guarding against cold in winter, as to induce habits of tenderness and effeminacy even among the lowest ranks. In the year 1797, a squadron of Russian ships of war wintered in our ports, and having become sickly, the writer visited them officially in order to make arrangements for their treatment and accommodation. He found that their unhealthy state proceeded chiefly from cold, and that their extremities were frost-bitten, that is, fell into torpidity and gangrene, from a degree of cold from which the British seamen felt no inconvenience. Had they been in their own country at this season, they would have been out of the reach of cold, in close and warm habitations under ground. It was remarked also, in the severe winter campaign of 1813-14, that of the native French, Austrians, Prussians, and Russians, the last-named suffered most.

What an ascendant, then, do the natives of the

British isles, as a military nation, possess over their neighbours and rivals in the north and south, in being able thus to endure the extremes of heat and cold better than the natives themselves of those respective countries, as has been historically and practically proved ! For, is it not, ascribable to this that we have outstripped our antagonists in the race of arts and arms in all climates, pushing the pursuits of war, commerce, and science, in the wide range of the five zones, to the utmost verge of the habitable earth, and the navigable ocean ?

The first, and principal class of the necessities of life above enumerated is food, the sources of which are pasturage, agriculture, horticulture, and fisheries. In an economical and political, as well as medical view, the several species of it may aptly be classed under three heads ; the animal, consisting of land and water animals ; the farinaceous, consisting of the grains, potatoes, and some other roots ; and the production of the garden, consisting of roots, fruits, and greens.

It is providentially ordained that the chief subsistence of this and other civilised nations should consist of the productions of agriculture, for this branch of industry is of all other employments, the most conducive to virtue and health, and the productions themselves are, of all others, the most salutary.

A valuable accession has been made to our stock of farinaceous food in the last hundred years by the

introduction of potatoes. In the degree in which they have been cultivated in Great Britain, there can be no doubt of their having added to the substantial comfort of the people, and even to their numbers. But in a sister kingdom, as already remarked, it is to their operation, as the main constituent of national sustenance, that her population has advanced from little more than one million to near seven millions in the last hundred and fifty years. With all this advantage serious objections have been raised to this species of food, in comparison and contrast with that of the grains. It is alleged, first, That the cultivation of this salutary and nutritious root demands so small a portion of time and labour in comparison of the grains, that a habit of sloth is engendered incompatible with happiness, dignity, and virtue, so as to make an approach to the evils of spontaneous food; Secondly, That this great facility of procuring adequate food, so far out-runs the acquirement of other necessities of life, clothing, fuel, and shelter, as to leave the people in the depth of degradation and misery;* Thirdly, It is alleged that this species of food differs from the grains in this important respect; that it is of so perishable a nature, that it hardly extends round the year, and far less can the abundance of one year be brought in aid of the deficiency of a fol-

* There is an exception to this in the province of Ulster, where the profits of manufacturing industry enable the peasants to purchase the means of subsistence from distant parts when it fails among themselves. Corn is also more cultivated in the North-eastern district than in the rest of the kingdom.

lowing year, in which a mortal scarcity may occur from the failure of a crop. Lastly, That the whole of these allegations are practically and deplorably proved by the physical and moral evils which so frequently and lamentably prevail in Ireland, particularly in the south-west districts of that kingdom, in the shape of famine, conflagration, and murder.

Though this article of subsistence, therefore, has proved an incomparable benefit to England, she will act wisely in continuing to use it to a limited amount, by employing it as an invaluable auxiliary and substitute, but by no means as a staple article, far less as an exclusive constituent of national subsistence. There is not however the same risk of this here as in Ireland, potatoes not having been introduced into England till an age of high civilization.

It has been said, that in a medical, as well as in a practical and economical view, farinaceous nourishment is pre-eminent over the other classes. In the regulation of diet for the sick, animal matter is too highly alimentary, stimulant, and putrescent, and the *olera*, as well as the greater number of roots and fruits are flatulent, acescent, of more difficult assimilation, and too low in the scale of nutrition.

It has been already remarked that if there should, in years of ordinary plenty, be just enough, and no more, produced, than what will sustain life, every year of scarcity must prove a year of famine. In simple ages, there are no motives for producing

more than what the wants of nature require. But as refinement and the arts of life advance, a demand arises for horses, fermented liquors, and the various artificial wants of luxury. These operate virtually as a perpetual granary, so that when a year of scarcity arises, the resources of superfluity may be turned into the channels of necessity. To this, and the free commerce of grain, both foreign and domestic, we owe our long exemption from famine in England.

But the writer ought to remember how much he now trespasses on the time and patience of his reader, and will cut short this part of the subject, by a close comparison of the health and longevity of periods so recent as those of William III. and George III. This comparison has the great merit of being grounded on principles which do not admit of a possibility of error in their application or results. It is built on a comparison of two similar financial operations of life annuities, one in the year 1693, the other in the year 1789. The evidence is that of mathematical demonstration, and the facts are of unquestionable accuracy, the ages and lives being recorded in the Exchequer. They are exhibited in the following Table, the fidelity and exactness of which will not be doubted, when the reader is informed that the Author is indebted for it to Mr. Finlaison, one of the most able calculators of this age, and is part of a series of labours in which he is assiduously engaged for the general benefit of society, as well as of the English Government.

A Table exhibiting the law of mortality in two different periods :

Age.	Mean duration of life, reckoning from		So that the increase of vitality is in the ratio of 100 to
	1693	1789	
5	40.737	51.580	126
10	38.066	48.310	126
20	31.799	41.190	130
30	27.625	35.370	128
40	22.697	29.070	128
50	17.316	22.325	129
60	12.451	15.855	127
70	7.489	10.100	135

It is mentioned in the Annual Register, 1761, p. 178, that “ It appears from an ancient register which may be depended on, that of 100 persons born at the same time, there were alive at the end of 6 years, 64 ; at 16 years, 46 ; at 26 years, 26 ; at 36 years, 16 ; at 46 years, 10 ; at 56 years, 6 ; at 66 years, 3 ; at 76 years, 1.” It is not said in what age this was, but whoever will cast his eye on the above Table will perceive with mingled surprise and satisfaction the highly improved value of life in the age in which we live. The persons, upon whom the calculation is made, are, no doubt, select lives, taken from the middle

ranks of society ; yet as they are similar cases, the comparison must be admitted to be fair. But a like improvement in health and duration of life in society at large, is deducible from the comparison of the *censuses*. The statement, as exhibited above, would not indeed be credible, if it did not rest on demonstrated conclusions, and not on those probabilities, conjectures, vague analogies, loose and questionable inferences with which the ordinary reasonings in political economy so much abound. Without such well-founded assurance, who could believe that human health and longevity are so superior, in the present age, to that immediately preceding it, as to afford the chance of nearly one-third more of earthly existence? And can it be doubted for a moment that all those means which add length to life, add also to its substantial happiness, respectability, and virtue. Various causes for this great change have been assigned, but it is hardly conceivable that they could have operated with such powerful effect. And while this is consolatory to society at large, it is flattering and encouraging to those who have lent their best endeavours to ameliorate the condition of humanity, and who have met with their best reward in the success of their endeavours. The causes appear chiefly referable to the more ample supply and better quality of food, better clothing, and more fuel, better habitations, improved habits of cleanliness and ventilation in persons and houses ; greater sobriety, and improved medical practice. Whe-

ther these causes operate with a relative degree of effect corresponding to the order in which they here stand, or any other order, must be matter of opinion ; but if health and long life are to be admitted as the surest criterions and constituent elements of human happiness, it would appear that we have much reason for self-congratulation in having had our lot cast in this age and country.

CURRENCY—TAXATION—NATIONAL DEBT.

Till the last three hundred years the precious metals were made to answer all the purposes of a medium of exchange in commercial transactions. In the 16th century, that age the greatest of all others, in the advancement of literature, science, and the other constituents of civilization, but above all in extending the intercourse of mankind, by commerce and geographical discoveries, these metals, though the stock of them was greatly augmented by the discovery of a new world, were found not sufficient for carrying on this greatly augmented intercourse. To remedy this, recourse was had to bills of exchange, and then to all the different forms of banking, by which credit, and the circulation of paper founded on it, was made to supply the room of the precious metals. Many of the present publick evils are alleged to arise from the abuse of this ; but it would be the height of presumption for the writer to enter into the various intricate and dark disquisitions belonging to this

subject. One thing certain is, that, contrary to the nature of the precious metals, this species of currency may be magnified *ad libitum*, so as to lose that quality consisting in rarity which so well qualifies these metals for performing the function of money; and may the Author venture to affirm, that had paper credit been limited to the purpose of carrying on actual transactions, the quantity would, like other mercantile concerns, have kept within salutary bounds by virtue of that spontaneous operation which regulates such matters better than artificial contrivances. It appears to the writer (though not much versed in such researches,) that paper money was made to outrun its wholesome amount through such means as Exchequer bills and votes of credit, which may be considered as actual coinages. The great issues of paper put in circulation by the Bank are not liable to the like objection, for the immense dealings connected with national loans, and the unprecedented amount of those dealings belonging to the equipment of fleets and armies, the furnishing of foreign subsidies, the extension of commerce, &c. made such issues unavoidable, the bullion being sent abroad. However this may be, there can be no doubt that to no other cause than the over-issue of paper, could be ascribed that depreciation which arose by a want of due correspondence between the metallic and paper money. This involves the questions regarding Taxation and the National Debt, with regard to which there is such discre-

pancies of opinion, that a looker-on, like myself, suspects that they have never yet been solved nor fully understood. The truths obvious to a plain man are, that the national debt, with all its inconveniences and evils, is an incomparable deposit for private property; that the shareholders form a valuable addition to that middle class of society which give so great and peculiar a superiority to this country over those which consist entirely of the very high and very low. For though the national creditors belong to all ranks, the great majority is believed to consist of those, the whole of whose property, or nearly so, is vested in the funds. And in case of matters coming to the extremity of physical force, it would surely be no mean advantage to have to count on two or three hundred thousand pairs of arms, enlisted by their interest on the side of good order and the defence of property. May it not also be alleged with perfect truth, that the greater part of twenty-seven millions annually dealt out to stockholders, is expended in the encouragement of industry, as has been shewn with regard to the rents of landlords. In short, although no man of sound mind would argue that the national debt is a positive benefit to the country, every dispassionate and well-judging man must feel a consolation, and almost an acquiescence under the evil, that besides its interesting so respectable a part of the community in the permanency of publick protection and good order, it forms an incomparable convenience as a deposit of private property; though it

though it cannot be denied, that it is a most stupendous, unexampled, and it is to be feared, inextricable burden on ourselves and our posterity.

In the mean time let us seek out all the palliation that it can admit of; and may it not be further alleged, that with all its pernicious qualities, there is inherent in it a most invaluable recommendation affecting national character, namely, an inviolate *good faith* towards the publick creditor, an exalted virtue peculiar to this country, which cannot be too highly prized, not only as a matter of pride, but as conferring the same advantage to a state as a good character does to an individual. And can we bring ourselves to believe that the French nation, having obtained their present financial advantage over us by a breach of good faith, will be able to avail themselves of it in the struggles in which they are now probably engaging? There are those also who, in the height of their anxiety to palliate the evil, allege that the taxation of the country having reached its utmost pitch, and the possibility of further loans being cut off, future ministries are thereby deprived of the means of plunging the country into unnecessary wars.

As to the question regarding over-accumulated capital, and the proportion which a circulating medium ought to hold to the magnitude of the transactions to be carried on, the writer of this, in a tour he made a few years ago in Switzerland, learnt from conversation and from perusing the history of

that country, a fine illustration in proof of the necessity of a fixed ratio between the amount of a circulating medium and that of the subject matter of the transactions to which it is to be applied. In the 14th and 15th centuries, the Swiss were in the practice of engaging themselves as mercenaries in the wars in Lombardy, and thereby accumulated masses of gold and silver, so large that they could find no use to which they could apply them, their nation and territory being too small to engage in enterprises of any kind, whether agricultural, manufacturing, or commercial, so great as to absorb their metallic funds. The consequence was, that these metals, having lost their established ratio to the amount of their dealings, were so depreciated that they proved of no sensible avail in advancing the prosperity of the country.* This is well stated in the Account of Switzerland, published at the time the writer visited that country, by Mr. Simon, who is also author of a tour, exhibiting perhaps the best Statistical Account of England which has yet appeared.

The writer of this has frequently reflected on what he reckons a very curious speculation, namely, what would now be the state of this country had we had no wars since the revolution. It is a question too profound for him to grapple with, neither has

* May not the valueless property of gold and silver in the hands of the Swiss be considered as a moral of the fable of the cock and the precious stone, and another exemplification of the reflection of Robinson Crusoe on their intrinsic want of value?

he been at all satisfied with any solution of it he has yet met with. One of the most general answers to his enquiries has been, that had all the capital laid out in these wars been, allowed to accumulate, and been applied to the encouragement of domestic industry, England would be now a garden and the products of its industry boundless. This is so extremely plausible that one hardly knows how to set about answering it; but surely if there is any truth in what has been said above regarding over-accumulated capital, nothing can be more hollow and unsound. For let any one reflect a moment on the impossibility of employing or feeding such a population as would arise in a generation or two, or of vending the commodities produced by a population even greater than either Switzerland or England, it would, in a generation or two, be so over crowded with farmers, gardeners, and manufacturers, that the product of their labours would glut the markets of the world. Let any one then say, if he can, in what way this over-plus capital could have been absorbed, if not by its being depreciated down to the level of the ratio which it ought to bear to that stock of commodities which human wants require, and by which the extent of the dealings of mankind must be bounded. But the writer is here forced to confess, that he finds himself bewildered in an inextricable labyrinth which turns his old brain giddy. He therefore abandons the consideration of it to some more powerful intellect, and seriously recommends to a University, or other publick body,

the following, as an excellent subject for one of their prize questions,—WHAT WOULD, ACCORDING TO THE MOST SOUND CONJECTURE, HAVE BEEN THE STATE OF ENGLAND NOW (IN THE YEAR 1831) IN POINT OF COMMERCE, POPULATION, MANUFACTURE, AGRICULTURE, AND ALL THE OTHER CONSTITUENTS OF NATIONAL HAPPINESS AND PROSPERITY, HAD SHE BEEN ENGAGED IN NO WARS, NOR CONTRACTED ANY NATIONAL DEBT, SINCE THE REVOLUTION OF 1688?

MORALITY—RELIGION—EDUCATION.

Of these the Author gives precedence to the last, though not the most important, not only because it stands foremost in the course of human life, but because it has been more the subject of doubt and disquisition, as a corrective of that bad conduct in the commonalty to which so large a share of the present distress is alleged to be imputable. To which it may be added, that it is on the good principles and state of mind infused in early life into the commonalty that the good order of society depends, and as they constitute the great majority of the species, most attention is due to them in the eye of the Patriot, the Statesman, and the Philanthropist.

Of the high importance, nay, indispensable, necessity of well regulated morality and religion to the well being of society, no doubt can be entertained, nor of the education conducive to them; but strong objections have been brought against that sort of education in which the mere improvement of intellect in the labouring classes is con-

cerned. It has been alleged, that by giving them certain high notions, it creates a discontented and seditious disposition. This seems sufficiently answered by stating, that when knowledge comes to be diffused it is no longer that distinction which gives them any pretence to an exemption from the most ordinary duties of their station.* Nor is it found that any of the modern disturbances have been accused of any such tendency; on the contrary, the most ignorant have been the most mischievous. And both reason and experience plead that a certain share of knowledge tends to humanize the mind. *Ingenuas didicisse. . . . emollit mores*. Why should not this apply to all ranks, with the understanding that great exercise of judgment should be employed in selecting and limiting that species and degree of knowledge which is respectively adapted to the several gradations of Society. To say that there is no necessity for a ploughman to be taught algebra is an objection which cannot be brought but in the spirit of affectation and flippancy. But there are certain innocent tracts, combining morality and religion with recreation within the reach of the most early age and the lowest rank. We hear of book-clubs among the mechanics and labourers of Scotland without any injury to their morals; on the contrary, they are thereby kept from the ale-house, nor have we heard that this country has been guilty of the late dreadful and disgraceful outrages of the

* See this well stated in the Edinburgh Review, Vol. 17, p. 60.

rioters of the south, such as the burning of stacks, and the like, which fill the mind with horror and contempt, and such as could never happen among a peasantry duly educated in early life. Nothing is more true than that education, even in its lowest degree, mere reading and writing, may be made the incentive and vehicle of the most atrocious crimes; but may not the like be affirmed with truth of every thing that is most excellent in life, and the more excellent the more so by perversion, excess, and abuse,—fire, water, food, physick, nay, religion itself.*

In appealing to history and experience, as well as reason, in arguing this point, a very curious

* While this sheet was hurrying through the press the Author consulted the Edinburgh Review on this subject. He found in vol. 17, page 62, of that justly celebrated periodical work, this point treated with a more than the ordinary share of its usual eloquence, ingenuity, caustic wit, deep research, and powerful argument, and he advises his reader to consult this ample store of knowledge on this and some of the other subjects here adverted to. The Author cannot however concede to these Reviewers the main and comprehensive truth of the question at issue. He remembers a conversation with a person of high consideration in the state, about thirty years ago, who remarked, that the wisdom of Providence was no where more conspicuous than in the limitation of high mental capacity to a very small proportion of the species, and that nothing could be named, however excellent in itself, which might not be rendered pernicious by abuse and excess. The writer asked in a playful tone whether he thought there could be an excess of wisdom and talent in the House of Commons? the answer was, "Yes. If the House of Commons were wholly composed of members of the same mental endowments as Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, (both then alive, 1801), it would resemble a machine which would grind itself to pieces."

and appropriate example has just been produced from the obscure annals of Scotland. It is a work compiled by Mr. Pitcairn,* and other gentlemen of the Scottish bar, extracted from certain authentick records, by which it appears that till the 16th century, when parochial schools were first instituted, the commonalty were of a description the most flagitious that could be met with in any nation of Europe. To such an extent indeed did crimes exist, that Mr. Fletcher of Salton, their celebrated patriot, or rather demagogue, declared, that he saw no way of dealing with them but by reducing them to a state of slavery. The institution of parochial schoolmasters produced a total change of the national character, for, during the last two centuries, this country has been held to be the most morally and orderly disposed of any in christendom, and at the same time possessing the most general diffusion of knowledge.

In answer to those anonymous libellers, who so grossly and invidiously vituperate the clergy of the Established Church of England for their neglect of the education and morals of the people, it

* These gentlemen seem to have opened a new mine in the records of that country, a mine of more value in the estimation of many than the common materials of history, inasmuch as facts explanatory of what relates to the happiness, dignity, moral and domestic habits of a nation, are more interesting to a rational mind than the narratives of battles, sieges, and court intrigues, and it is much to be regretted that so little notice is taken of the former in historical works. Great gratitude is due to Dr. Henry, and even to some of our Novelists for deviating from this practice.

seems sufficient to say, that on those public occasions which so frequently occur at the Assizes, at which Grand Juries advert to different degrees of criminality in different districts, there is no instance of their having ever imputed the local prevalence of vice to any neglect of the clergy in the performance of their duties. Nor indeed is it conceivable that a highly educated and respectable body of men, endowed with so large a proportion of the national property for their support, should be wanting in duties obligatory on the conscience above all others. But neither are the clergy called upon to inculcate laboriously those humble acquirements necessary before the adult age; and is it not singular that an opulent country like England should not be provided with an establishment of schoolmasters for this so highly desirable end.

Many of the sarcasms levelled against the clergy are certainly captious and groundless, and will not apply to them as far as regards that juvenile education, which has the chief share in stamping the character in the future adult age. Nevertheless it will hardly be denied, that there are circumstances connected with the national establishment requiring notice, and which would admit of amendment, such as the non-residences, and the great amount and inequality of the temporalities; but above all other evils is that of tithes, than which assuredly no engine could be better constructed for alienating, divorcing, as it were, the pastor from his flock, and defeating the whole benefit of religious establishments. And I believe there is no

good man who would not gladly see the day on which some other means than tithes were discovered for remunerating the clergy; nor would that day be more gladly hailed by any so much as the clergy themselves.

And can it be doubted that a subordinate establishment, under their guidance, for juvenile instruction would be of the most vital importance to the temporal and eternal interests of those flocks which are soon to fall under their more immediate inspection and guidance. The exhortations of the clergy to minds not duly pre-disposed, is like sowing seed on an untilled field. Can it be seriously maintained, that persons in their early non-age will be in a better condition as regards themselves and the community around them, by being left in a state of ignorance, a prey to their budding prejudices, passions, and all manner of errors, moral and intellectual, grovelling superstition, and sensuality, than if the same minds were taught by instruction, habits, and example, to be made sensible of the advantage of industry over idleness, that "honesty is the best policy," and above all, that most transcendant of all maxims, that of "doing as we would be done by."

There is no where to be found a better exposition of the fundamental rules of morality than in the New Testament, but even here do we see how things the most precious are by perversity and misconstruction converted into the most pernicious. For do we not see on the one hand, one

section of the christian world in utter neglect and contempt of those relative duties which constitute the happiness and dignity of human nature, make the paramount duty of man to consist in the mere observance of rites, while another division of the christian world, with an equal disregard of the relative duties, make the great and only obligatory ties of duty to consist in orthodox faith, on the soundness of which they make salvation to depend, as the others do, on the observance of rites. The reader will be at no loss to perceive, that the two descriptions of christians here alluded to, are the Roman Catholics and the Protestant sectaries, not the Established Churches of England and Scotland. It is a favourite expression among the sectaries, in justification of their undervaluing ‘good works,’ that is, practical morality, “that their congregations can learn them as well from Socrates or Epictetus as from their bibles.” But in answer to this it may be averred, that in no Pagan work are the cardinal virtues more fully expounded and recommended, nor even go so far as the scriptures, for the primitive converts are cautioned against giving a preference to rites, ceremonies, and modes of faith, over moral duties, in various passages, “Do as you would be done by.” Justice and mercy are assigned a precedence over the “blood of bulls and of goats;” even the law and the prophets, if my defective memory does not deceive me, and I have often heard it regretted that such passages as those were not more frequently adopted as the texts of ser-

mons and practical discourses from the pulpit, than points of orthodox and speculative doctrine. Nor would the homely maxim that honesty is the best policy be unworthy of being inculcated there.

ON THE CONNECTION OF WANT OF EMPLOYMENT AND
LOW WAGES WITH PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION.

That great distress has existed in certain districts of England from want of employment and low wages seems beyond a doubt, the former chiefly among the agricultural, the latter among the manufacturing class. And as this is a new thing in the history of the country, some cause or causes must be sought for peculiar to these times. The most remarkable feature of it has certainly been that of a war, the most extensive, the most expensive, the most bloody, and most protracted, which has been known in the annals of the world; a war also in which the British nation, by its superior power, wealth, and maritime ascendancy, attained an unexampled pitch of renown and extent of territory, in swaying the destinies of the world.

But what was equally novel was, that this same nation supplied by its industry and commerce the wants of the whole civilised world through the industry, energy, enterprize, and ingenuity of her handicrafts and merchants; for under a stagnation of intercourse inseparable from such a wide spreading war, these wants could no otherwise have been supplied.

Nor is it difficult to trace to this apparent state of prosperity and glory the causes of the distresses of which we are in search. That high degree of productive industry above-mentioned necessarily terminated on the return of peace, leaving the country clogged with a redundancy of the products of industry, and of the hands which produced them. Of all the laws which regulate human dealings there is none so paramount as that of *supply* and *demand*, a principle affecting equally the procreative increase of the labourers as the products of their labours; for was it not the demand for labor which excited the supply of labourers through the encouragement of improvident marriages? which, in addition to the cause of those before-mentioned, namely, parish allowances, goes far towards accounting for the number of hands thrown out of employment in manufactures. But this principle is still more conspicuous in the case of inanimate objects, as the regulator of production and consumption.

And in accounting for the distress among farming labourers, it cannot be denied that though the great majority of landlords are far from being harsh in the exaction of rents, there have been enough of them of a different description to account for those local distresses of which there has been too clear evidence, and in addition to which there is perhaps still more reason to complain of the parish allowances than among the manufacturers. But in neither case could recourse ever have been had to parliamentary corruption or wrongful represen-

tation, except in the minds of brutal and uneducated men, some of whom under real distress, but still more (as was proved by the Commission employed for the suppression of the outrages,) from the wanton spirit of sedition. For those who really suffered from want there has been the excuse of that ignorance which in similar cases deprives the sufferers of the sound exercise of their judgment, and which made them join in the cry that was afloat regarding parliamentary corruption and unequal representation.

It is one of the most sound doctrines of Political Economy that *supply* and *demand*, production and consumption, so act upon each other as to produce a mutual adjustment better by spontaneous operation than could be done by legislative regulation. But there seem good reasons for this not taking place with equal precision in the present as in ordinary cases. There was first, the great distance of markets, which prevented the producer from procuring in time such intelligence regarding markets as could enable him to extend or contract his speculations in conformity to the demand; there was also the very great amount of these markets; there was also the same effect produced by the great uncertainty, as well as inequality, of the events of peace and war, all contributing to leave an enormous redundancy both of labourers and the fruits of their labour, on the arrival of peace.

Such are the reasonings which the writer de-

rives more from his intercourse with others than his own sagacity or research. His only feelings on the subject are, that he would unwillingly think badly of a form of government which, with all its faults, he has been in the habit of considering from its *practical results*, as the best that human wisdom has as yet devised, and that perhaps with the exception of the Roman Empire, under the reigns of Augustus and Trajan, no portion of the human species has enjoyed an equal degree of substantial happiness as the British nation, from the Revolution of 1688 to our own times.

As I have been able to spare only a limited share of my time from the duties of my station, I gladly adopted such maxims and principles as I considered most sound, from the mouths and writings of those of whose judgment I entertained the highest opinion. In conversation with Mr. Windham on the subject of representative government, he used to express a doubt whether representation ought, either from history or theory to be considered as the sole basis of the popular part of the English government. History informs us that the House of Commons, particularly in the reign of Henry III. when it first assumed its regular functions, was created in the midst of civil wars, factions, and the arbitrary mandates of kings and usurpers, and not formed on any plan calmly digested either in its elections, dissolutions, prorogations, or deliberations, which all grew out of incidental circumstances. And in point of reason, abstract repre-

sentation seems far from being the best rule by which to be guided. For without bestowing a thought on the female sex, the rule by which adult males are to be selected is liable to such variances as can hardly fail to involve the elements of strife. What is to be the age of candidates, what their amount of property and taxes? On the subject of universal suffrage, he quoted a very terse and appropriate passage from some part of the writings of Soame Jennings, a writer whose sententious style, instructive reasoning, and wit, are not so much known as they ought to be. This author, in the passage alluded to, says, that at the first perusal of Locke and Rousseau on the subject of universal suffrage, the argument appeared so plausible as to seem almost self-evident; but on further consideration he saw clearly that their error proceeded from a logical fallacy, a *non sequitur* in setting out, by which they took for granted a fundamental principle which they ought to have proved; they took for granted, without proof, that *man is a reasonable being*, which not being so, their argument falls to the ground. Mr. Jennings had here probably in his mind an allusion to certain wild theories which began to be engendered in the fancies of the French political theorists about the commencement of their revolution, particularly, it was said, by the Marquis de Condorcet. The rock upon which he and some of the other most influential leaders of the French Revolution split, was the theory of the bulk of mankind being wise enough to govern them-

selves ; and in believing that others were equally well intentioned as they themselves, and with a smaller infusion of the black passions than belongs to the ordinary race of mankind. They built upon this hollow foundation a superstructure which soon overwhelmed them all in its ruins. And it was in following up a principle which they miscalled the *perfectability of human nature*, that many have traced (and I believe with truth,) all the horrors of the most horrible Revolution that has ever blotted the pages of history. That in every Government there ought to be a representative body in some shape or other, seems to be universally admitted ; but that, in every nation, even the most civilized, there must be a large proportion, nay, a very great majority, who belong to the labouring class, in comparative ignorance, and who ought, for their own advantage, to leave to the educated classes the function both of electing and being elected, seems equally evident. But feeling that I am here in danger of engaging in prolix disquisition, I shall again resort to a short exposition which enlightened my own mind, and may have the same effect on that of others. I allude again to a saying of Mr. Windham's, by recording which I may save from oblivion a relick of the wisdom of that great and good man. He remarked to me in conversation, that though every rational being must hold the opinion that Government is an institution essentially formed for the benefit of the *governed*, and not of the *governing*, it does not

follow that universal suffrage, or even any thing approaching it, that is the majority of the adult male population, ought to have a share in the government, for government being made for their benefit, it would be much better managed by the educated classes than by themselves. In short, the force of the argument turns on the import of the prepositions *By* and *For*, a due attention to which seems practically to comprise more sound political knowledge than volumes of theory ; and the force of it is irresistible when we appeal to the analogy of a family, which in this is an exact epitome of a community ; for the labouring classes are the children in non-age ; the educated classes are the parents ; and it will not be disputed, that though the main object of the attention of parents consists in maintaining, providing for, and educating their children, it does not follow that the latter are to exercise their own judgment in the management of the family ; that on the contrary, they could not suffer a greater injury than to be left to their own guidance. In further aid of this argument nothing can be more rationally alleged than what is understood by that *virtual representation* which applies so fairly to that part of the community, which includes the whole female sex, and those males, whether minors or adults, who have no elective franchise, but who all enjoy the same protection of the laws and are subject to the same amount of taxation, and no more, than the electors and the elected. The only exception to this is the freedom

from arrest, belonging to the members of both Houses of Parliament, an immunity so little affecting the rights of the whole population as not to be deserving of notice.

It ought to be mentioned, in justice to Mr. Windham, that in spite of his conviction in favour of representative government, there could not be a man more friendly to the monarchical form of it, his estimate of human perfectibility differing so much from that of the French theorists, that he was of opinion that government, particularly the executive part of it, could never be carried on with good effect but by a single will, and that among equals charged with power, the jarring of the black passions must ever be such as to destroy all likelihood of a well regulated, durable, and stable government; that had we been a republick or a heptarchy, we should now be only emerging from barbarism in place of contesting the sceptre of the world, as we now do. This conversation must have occurred sometime between the years 1803, on the renewal of the revolutionary war, and 1810, the year in which Mr. Windham died.—Mr. Windham was well convinced, and he inculcated by his eloquence, that whatever occasional evils inseparable from human nature, may occur in the ministration of monarchy even under a child, a fool or a villain, there is less chance, under the control provided by the constitution of fastening responsibility on Ministers, of anarchy, and mis-rule, and a better chance of maintaining good order and liberty,

than under a many-headed elective monster, under the title of Directory, or whatever other appellation.

THE FUTURE AND PROSPECTIVE SUPPLY OF FOOD—
CORN LAWS—THE SIZE OF FARMS—FARTHER RE-
FLECTIONS ON EDUCATION—EMIGRATION—CON-
CLUSION.

In case the Census, which is to be instituted this year, being the decennial year from 1821, should exhibit as large an increase of population as the former intervals of the same duration, the number will be nearly three times what it was in the year 1700. The various sources from which the corresponding supplies of subsistence have been derived, have been already enumerated. In consequence of improved agricultural skill, and the introduction of new articles of human food, and provender for cattle, namely, potatoes, together with turnips, sown grasses, and other articles for cattle, this nation not only maintained itself, but made annual exportations till the year 1766. At this period, the domestic population became so great in consequence of the prodigious increase of hands employed in manufactures, that not only was there no further exportation, but we became dependant on foreign supplies. But the demand for labour, by its encouragement to marriage, had the effect of creating such an inordinate increase of population as to have a great share in the late and present distress. The foreign supplies were in a great

measure checked and abridged, from its being judged advisable for the protection of English agriculture, to counteract the falling of prices, by an Act prohibiting importation except under a particular rate of the home markets. This was highly approved by some of those who were regarded as of the soundest judgment in such subjects ; and the writer of this (though his opinion may not be worth quoting) fell into the same error. This error consisted in the taking it for granted that there could at all times be commanded from abroad a sufficiency of corn to make up for whatever deficiency there might be in domestick production. But the uncontrollable state of markets in a few years made it be suspected that the surplus production of the Continent could not be relied on except in years in which they themselves enjoyed exuberant plenty. This gave occasion to the well-judged mission of Mr. Jacob, who by dint of able research, confirmed this doubt in all its plenitude.

It becomes then a most serious question how this apprehended deficiency is to be supplied in time to come. The first idea that occurs is, that the diminished demand for labour will diminish procreation ; for past observation and experience has proved, that such has been the operation of moral causes. In further abatement of this appalling evil, there is the consolation that our fields may be made still more productive by the present progressive state of English agricultural SCIENCE, for there is now so much ingenuity introduced into rural eco-

mony as to make it well deserving of being dignified with that appellation. Great complaints have been raised by the operative community that they have been in various ways unfairly treated. They allege, that by the division of commons they have been deprived of some of their ancient rights, but still more do they complain of low wages.

With regard to the former of these, it has been proposed by the Bishop of Bath and Wells (apparently with excellent judgment, and certainly with the finest feelings of a man and a clergyman) to let small tenements, consisting of a cottage and a bit of land, such as along with the advantage derivable from the wages of a hired servant, has been known in past times to maintain a family in some degree of ease and comfort. The example of Ireland has rendered this mode of accommodating the labouring population to be much objected to. But this debate concerning the comparative expediency of large and small farms as applicable to England, has proceeded on the erroneous supposition of the two schemes being incompatible. The total dissimilitude of the two countries in the distribution of land, as before stated, page 40, takes off the whole weight of any argument from analogy. Is it not sufficiently clear that England not only admits, but requires, that there should be farms of all sizes? Without a large proportion of the counties being laid out in large farms there could not possibly be sufficient redundancy of production to maintain the manufacturers, the numbers of which

exceed whatever has been known in any country. But cottages and small tenements seem not only to be compatible with this, but to be a commodious means of furnishing labourers, particularly in the present times, when the great farmers shew an aversion to household labourers; neither does there seem any objection to there being farms of all sizes between the cottages and the large farms. There used to be in Scotland a class of small farmers, called *crofters*, who instead of an acre or two, or half an acre of land, like the cottagers, rented from ten to twenty acres, and constituted in those days a respectable class of the rural community.

By this plan of cottages and small tenements a number of those out of employment would be disposed of; but may not the writer with unfeigned diffidence submit to the landlords and upper class of farmers, whether or not such an increase of wages as would enable the labouring class to maintain themselves and family, is not imperiously called for, though the evil may have been much exaggerated. By means of higher wages they could not only improve their diet, but make such improvements in their clothing and habitation, as would be highly conducive to their health. The writer has remarked that the increased longevity applied only to those of better condition, for the labourers were not members of tontines, and it is well known to those who are in the habit of mixing with the poor, that they are almost all subject to severe rheumatick affections as they advance in life, which cannot fail to shorten

their lives, an evil which improved habitation and clothing, when they shall be able to afford it, would tend more to obviate than even improved diet. Let not this be understood as a charge of inhumanity against the whole body of landlords and farmers, the very great majority of whom are humane and reasonable. But the small proportion who, in order to indulge in a luxurious life, extort high rents, and either bestow small wages, or charge them partly on the parish, is sufficient to afford a pretence to the turbulent to excite seditious commotions, as has been fully exemplified by the late unexampled outrages. But of all the prospective consolations for the supply of food it is to be hoped that Ireland will prove the greatest. Does not its extensive and excellent soil, with a little further assistance from British capital, qualify it to be to England what Sicily and Sardinia were to ancient Rome? This, along with the great blessing of keeping the Irish labourers at home, will render England for ever independent of continental supplies.

The next remedy which the writer of this has humbly but most earnestly to suggest, is one of more remote operation, but as he conceives of the most certain efficiency. It is that no time may be lost in instituting a plan of universal juvenile education, his chief reasons for which have already been assigned; and it may be urged as an additional recommendation, that besides curing ignorance, and elevating the character, it will bring about such a humanised state of the whole moral

constitution, as to prove an effectual remedy against the bad habits of drunkenness, and other grovelling and vicious practices. It would also render unnecessary a plausible enough proposal, and which was actually attempted, though without success, in Germany, namely, that of denying the rites of marriage to all those who could not give proof of their possessing the means of maintaining a family. But all this is better expressed in the language of Mrs. Marcet, reputed authress of a work of great merit, entitled *Conversations on Political Economy*, page 158. “ *I would give the rising generation such an education as would render them not only moral and religious, but industrious, frugal, and provident. In proportion as the mind is informed we are able to calculate the consequences of our actions; it is the infant and the savage who live only for the present moment; those whom instruction has taught to think, reflect upon the past, and look forward to the future. Education gives rise to prudence, not only by enlarging our understandings, but by softening our feelings, by humanising the heart, and promoting amiable affections. The rude and inconsiderate peasant marries without either foreseeing or caring for the miseries he may entail on his wife and children; but he who has been taught to value the comforts and decencies of life will not heedlessly involve himself in poverty, and its long train of miseries.*” To this may it not be added, that it is little short of blasphemy to affirm, that the Being whom *God has created after his own*

image can be injured by acquiring that share of intellectual improvement of which his nature is made susceptible, and which cannot be conceived injurious under judicious regulation.

The only other source of relief that has been proposed for redundant population is emigration ; but the objection to it (from this consideration at least) is so obvious, that it need hardly be mentioned ; for from what has been said of the propensity of the unthinking and vulgar to improvident marriage, the prospect of emigration would hold out an additional temptation. This ought not however to be adduced as a reason for condemning all emigration ; for newly discovered and unoccupied regions, by every consideration of philanthropy, ought to be turned to the purpose of multiplying the human species, whenever, as exemplified in North America, it can be done in circumstances conducive to the multiplication of happy human beings.

CONCLUSION.

It would not become the writer to enter at large into the questions of Financial Retrenchments and Reform of Parliament, which agitate the public mind so much at this moment, these subjects having been so ably and amply treated both by the *viva voce* discussions in Parliament and by the press. With respect to financial retrenchment, it would be the height of presumption in an obscure individual, to enter upon that subject, after the very able and ample researches and expositions of

Sir Henry Parnell : and with respect to the question of Reform, it is one of an importance so peculiar to itself, as to fill those who duly appreciate and approach it, with a sort of religious awe, and when we hear it treated with ignorance or levity, we are ready to apply to those who are so little aware of its solemnity and vital interest, what the poet has said of those who treat religious subjects lightly, that

“ Fools rush in, where Angels fear to tread.”

What can good subjects do but fervently wish and pray that the Legislature may see it in all its bearings and importance, and above all that they be aware of its involving a decision which cannot like ordinary matter be revised and rescinded. Moreover all good subjects will ardently hope that it may be constantly present to the minds of our legislators, that though there is no man of sound mind and ordinary understanding, who does not believe in the expediency, of such an alteration as the altered circumstances of the age demand ; yet it ought to be recollected, as already stated, that under a form of government little different from the present, this country has enjoyed a measure of prosperity and happiness from the Revolution of 1688, to our own times, superior to any thing that can be named in modern history, nor in the ancient world, unless we except the Roman Empire under Augustus, Trajan, or Antoninus from the pillars of Hercules to the banks of the Euphrates. And let it not be put in the power of our pos-

terity to accuse their ancestors of precipitancy, nor that in our haste we allowed ourselves to be guided by theory, rather than by the practical lessons of history and experience : and in case of the newly constructed machine not working so well as had been expected, let it not be alleged in excuse, that such was the distracted state of the public mind, and such the impatience of the multitude, that due time was not allowed for deliberation, for this of all excuses would be the most humiliating, inasmuch as it may be construed into *intimidation*. In order, therefore, to allow further time for mature deliberation, and with so wide an optional range for the graduation and modification of the elective suffrage, in order also to avoid so mortifying an imputation, there are many of no small pretensions to good sense, though not statesmen by profession, who would be happy to see the ultimate decision of this question postponed for a little, say to the next Session of Parliament, when the passions of the community at large, may have cooled, by passing from their present state of excitement and acerbity, and shall have ripened into a mellow and tractable condition, and when it will be seen whether or not those Reforms brought about in France and Belgium a few months ago, are likely to be attended by all the benefits so sanguinely and confidently foretold by their authors and admirers. If these hints merit any notice, there is not a set of ministers, who from publick confidence founded on purity of intention, manly spirit of enterprise, and acknowledged talents are

better qualified to carry them into effect than the present under the auspices of a patriotick Monarch.

Such are the effusions with which the mind of the writer has for some time been big, and without the communication of which to the publick, he could not have sunk quietly into that grave, into which from complicated bodily infirmities, and a mind little at ease, he feels himself descending, and to the world and to his country, he has only to exclaim,

Valete.

VIXI.

OMISSION AND ERROR.

Page 18. In treating of the probability of future famines, it might have been mentioned that, very recently, Professor Authenrieth, of Wirtemberg, has discovered an easy process by which saw-dust can be converted into edible flour, which will prevent the possibility of any famine in all time to come.

Page 42. Dele "It is not said in what age, but."

